



**STAFF REPORT
REZONE
180 & 190 PINECREST DRIVE
ZONE-2025-06-1109
JULY 3rd, 2025**

APPLICANT: SPG Planners + Engineers
OWNER:SynForge LLC
FUTURE LAND USE REQUEST: Remains *Mixed Density Residential*
ZONING REQUEST: From RM-1 to RM-2
TYPE OF REQUEST: Type II
LOCATION: 180 & 190 Pinecrest Drive
TAX MAP NUMBERS: 173A4 B011 & 173A4 B012
COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT:District 4
PROJECT SIZE: 0.877 Acres
PRESENT USE: Residential Single Family
PROPOSED USE: Residential Multi-Family
PUBLIC NOTICE POSTED: June 18th, 2025
STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**APPROVAL**
PLANNING COMM. RECOMMENDATION:**PENDING**
MAYOR & COMMISSION AGENDA SETTING: .. July 15th, 2025 (tentative)
MAYOR & COMMISSION VOTING SESSION: August 5th, 2025 (tentative)

I. Summary Recommendation

The applicant is requesting to rezone the 0.877-acre tract constituting 180 and 190 Pinecrest Drive from RM-1 to RM-2 (Mixed Density Residential). A non-binding concept plan was included by the Applicant as part of this submittal. Staff has evaluated the request for its compatibility with the neighborhood's land uses and zoning.

The project is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan because of its infill location and location within surrounding RM zoned properties. Approval of the zoning request would maintain the property's alignment with the Future Land Use Map. It is also compatible with the Zoning Map. The rezone would allow for an incremental intensification of residential density in a location near the university and in a neighborhood that has a variety of residential arrangements and abuts a vibrant neighborhood business district. Therefore, **Staff recommends approval of the request.**

Planning Commission Recommendation: Pending

II. Purpose of Applicant Request

A. Proposal

The applicant is requesting to rezone the 0.877-acre tract constituting 180 and 190 Pinecrest Drive from RM-1 to RM-2 (Mixed Density Residential). As part of the request, the Applicant has included a proposed concept for a multi-family townhome development intended to meet all RM-2 code

requirements. As the request is non-binding, Staff is evaluating this request for its compatibility with the neighborhood's land uses and zoning map while providing feedback on the conceptual design itself.

B. Existing Conditions

The property is developed as two single-family parcels. Any approved rezone would likely lead to a recombination of the two parcels into one through ACC's Final Plat process in order to facilitate a new design. The existing parcels sit on the corner of Pinecrest Drive and Northview Drive and are surrounded by RM-1 properties, save the property directly across Pinecrest Drive, which is home to the University of Georgia's baseball team at Foley Field. The neighborhood abuts UGA and the Five Points business district, it has a traditional neighborhood development pattern that includes a variety of housing types and cohesive, neighborhood-scale commercial.

The RM-1 properties in the vicinity of the subject property are primarily duplexes, townhomes and apartments, but there are a handful of single-family homes to the rear (west). To the south (across Northview Drive) are Multifamily Townhomes similar in nature to what the Applicant proposes.

A stream constitutes the northern property boundary and with it imposes limitations on development in regards to riparian buffers and environmental areas. Per the Applicant, there are also powerline easements and setbacks as well as sanitary sewer easements that further constrain development on this site. In response, the applicant has provided a concept that concentrates development on the south side of the properties.

III. Policy Analysis

A. Compatibility with Comprehensive Plan

The 2023 Comprehensive Plan calls for the following policies that **are** supported in this project:

- *Infill and redevelopment should be prioritized over greenfield expansion.*
- *Encourage responsible, environmentally-friendly development along river corridors.*

This property is an infill location and redevelopment of this site would allow for a more appropriate amount of residential density given the surrounding area.

Overall, the proposal is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan.

B. Compatibility with the Future Land Use Map

The 2023 Future Land Use Map designates the subject parcel as *Mixed Density Residential*, which is described as follows:

Mixed Density Residential

These are residential areas where higher density residential development is allowed and intended. Limited nonresidential uses designed at a neighborhood scale may be incorporated into these areas (e.g. churches, schools, daycare facilities, small businesses and offices). Buildings should be oriented towards the street and include streetscape enhancements. Their design should include connections between uses, good pedestrian connections, and compatibility with public transit. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation.

No change to the Future Land Use Map is required since the proposed zoning action is already

compatible with the Map. The proposal is compatible with the character description.

C. Compatibility with the Zoning Map

The applicant has requested a rezone from RM-1 to RM-2 (Mixed-Density Residential). The following information has been provided to compare the difference in development intensity between the existing RM-1 zoning and the requested RM-2 zone. Broadly, a comparison of scale, use, and design is offered here to help decision makers evaluate the changes that would be allowed if the request is approved. In terms of building scale, the following chart illustrates the differences in size and scale of buildings that could be constructed:

Standard	CURRENT	REQUESTED
	RM-1 Zoning	RM-2 Zoning
Minimum Lot Size	5,000 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.
Density	16 beds/acre	24 beds/acre
Max Lot Coverage	55%	65%
Max Building Height	30 ft.	35 ft.
Setbacks	6-15 ft.	6-10 ft.
Conserved Canopy	35%	25%
Total Canopy	55%	50%
Parking	1-2 spaces/unit	1-2 spaces/unit

The Athens-Clarke County Zoning Ordinance includes a list of defined uses and designates where they can or cannot be established. For this request, the most noticeable difference between the current RM-1 zoning and the proposed RM-2 zoning is the residential density allowed. The RM-2 zone would allow for an increase in the number of bedrooms on a per acre basis from 16 beds to 24 beds. It also allows for a slight increase in impervious surface coverage and a slight decrease in required landscaping.

As the vast majority of surrounding properties are zoned RM-1, this request would be an intensification in terms of density, but would serve as a transition between the institutional use across the street (Foley Field) and the mix of 1-2 story housing types behind the property.

D. Consistency with Other Adopted ACCGov Plans, Studies, or Programs

No applicable plans were found.

IV. Technical Assessment

A. Environment

The Arborist has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval without comment.

B. Grading and Drainage

The Transportation & Public Works Department has reviewed the proposal and provided the following comment:

- *TPW cannot support this application with the driveway shown in the current location. It would need at least 50' of separation from the next driveway and the intersection.*

C. Water and Sewer Availability

The Public Utilities Department has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval with the following conditions:

- *ACC water is available*
- *ACC sanitary sewer is available*
- *Capacity is available for the proposed build out of 3,150 GPD*
- *Capacity is available for the max allowable build out of 3,150 GPD per the proposed zoning*
- *The max allowable build out per the current zoning is 1,680 GPD*
- *Each townhome unit is required to have its own independent water and sewer service connection to the main.*
- *Ensure minimum of 5' separation between trees and services. Also, meters must be located outside of drivable areas.*
- *Replace existing 1944 RD Woods fire hydrant on Northview Dr*
- *Remove cantilevered porch from sewer easement*

D. Transportation

The Transportation & Public Works Department has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval without comment.

E. Fire Protection

The Fire Marshal has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval with the following comments:

- *Due to the height of the buildings, an aerial apparatus access road is required, as mandated for structures exceeding 30 feet. However, the existing road frontage is not suitable for aerial access because overhead power lines obstruct the required ladder positioning. In addition, the proposed parking area includes an access road that exceeds 150 feet in length and lacks a code-compliant turnaround, which is necessary for fire apparatus maneuverability.*
- *Further clarification is needed regarding the inclusion of a fire sprinkler system. If the buildings are equipped with sprinklers, the allowable access road length may be extended, providing some flexibility in the site design.*
- *The development has access to a sufficient and reliable firefighting water supply, rated at 2000 AFF. Hydrant spacing and placement will be coordinated with the developer during the plan review process to ensure compliance with local code. All hydrants are expected to remain unobstructed and accessible.*
- *To support the current layout, both a fire sprinkler system and a fire alarm system will be required. The fire department connection (FDC) and riser room locations will also be reviewed during the plan review phase to ensure proper labeling, visibility, and accessibility from exterior entry points.*
- *Provided the project includes both a fire sprinkler and alarm system, the Fire Marshal's Office may be able to support the current design.*
- *The development will be required to meet all applicable fire codes in effect at the time of plan review.*

F. Compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and Development Standards

Since a concept plan is not required or proposed with this request, Staff reviewed the request for general compliance with the Code. If approved, any proposal will be reviewed for full code compliance at the time of permitting review. The applicant has not made any waiver requests, so they will be expected to comply with all of the applicable standards. Signage and lighting are not reviewed at this stage, but the applicant is expected to adhere to those standards as well. Based on an initial review, Staff has the following comments:

Staff Notes:

- 1. The applicant has indicated that they are interested in constructing 3-story, flat-roofed attached townhomes. Staff notes that, per 9-25-8.B, flat roofs are not permitted on primary structures.*

End of Staff Report.

Reviewed

Zoning Criteria Considered by Staff

The following factors have been considered as set forth in *Guhl v. Holcomb Bridge Road Corp.*, 238 Ga. 322, 232 S.E.2d 830 (1977).

- ☒ The proposed zoning action conforms to the Future Land Use map, the general plans for the physical development of Athens-Clarke County, and any master plan or portion thereof adopted by the Mayor and Commission.
- ☒ The proposed use meets all objective criteria set forth for that use provided in the zoning ordinance and conforms to the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and all its elements.
- ☒ The proposal will not adversely affect the balance of land uses in Athens-Clarke County.
- ☒ The cost of the Unified Government and other governmental entities in providing, improving, increasing or maintaining public utilities, schools, streets and other public safety measures.
- ☒ The existing land use pattern surrounding the property in issue.
- ☒ The possible creation of an isolated district unrelated to adjacent and nearby districts.
- ☒ The aesthetic effect of existing and future use of the property as it relates to the surrounding area.
- ☒ Whether the proposed zoning action will be a deterrent to the value or improvement of development of adjacent property in accordance with existing regulations.
- ☒ Whether there are substantial reasons why the property cannot be used in accordance with existing zoning; provided, however, evidence that the economic value of the property, as currently zoned, is less than its economic value if zoned as requested will not alone constitute a significant detriment.
- ☒ Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property that give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal.
- ☒ Public services, which include physical facilities and staff capacity, exist sufficient to service the proposal.
- ☒ The population density pattern and possible increase or over-taxing of the load on public facilities including, but not limited to, schools, utilities, and streets.
- ☒ The possible impact on the environment, including but not limited to, drainage, soil erosion and sedimentation, flooding, air quality and water quantity.